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Preliminary Amendment

IN THE CLAIMS:

A full listing of the claims, including any amendments made by this paper, follows below:

1. (Previously Presented) A feed grip for being coupled to a slide rod of a slicer comprising:

a gripping plate having a front surface and rear surface, said front surface being shaped to grip a food product, said gripping plate including an attachment portion extending generally outwardly from said rear surface, said attachment portion including a pair of opposed, generally laterally extending feet;

a handle having an opening shaped to releasably receive said attachment portion therein in more than two radial positions such that said attachment portion can be generally rigidly coupled to said handle, wherein said opening of said handle includes a generally inwardly tapered side wall such that said feet engage said side wall and are urged together when said attachment portion is urged into said opening and wherein said handle is configured to be manually decoupled, without the use of tools, from said attachment portion by twisting said handle relative to said attachment portion such that said attachment portion and said handle are not generally rigidly coupled, wherein said handle has a generally continuous outer surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with said opening of said handle; and

a feed arm including a pair of feed arm openings, a first one of said feed arm openings being shaped to receive said attachment portion therethrough, a second one of said feed arm openings being shaped to receive said slide rod of said slicer therethrough.

2. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 further comprising a wave washer located between said handle and said feed arm or between said feed arm and said gripping plate such that when said wave washer is compressed said wave washer urges said handle away from said gripping plate and/or said feed arm.

3. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said gripping plate includes a plurality of teeth extending generally forwardly from said front surface.

4. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 3 wherein said plurality of teeth each have a length of between about 8.89 mm and about 10.16 mm (about 0.35 and about 0.40 inches) and have a tip diameter of between about 1.27 mm and about 3.81 mm (about 0.05 inches to about 0.15 inches).

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said feed arm includes a connecting arm extending between both of said feed arm openings.

7. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said attachment portion includes a pair of spaced generally parallel legs configured to be displaced radially inwardly and toward each other, each leg being coupled to one of said feet, and wherein said opening of said handle includes a pair of opposed end openings, each end opening being shaped to receive one of said feet therein to couple said feed grip to said handle.

8. (Original) The feed grip of claim 7 wherein each foot extends generally outwardly from the associated leg and includes a curved outer surface.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A feed grip for being coupled to a slide rod of a slicer comprising:~~

~~a gripping plate having a front surface and rear surface, said front surface being shaped to grip a food product, said gripping plate including an attachment portion extending generally outwardly from said rear surface, said attachment portion including a pair of opposed, generally laterally extending feet;~~

~~a handle having an opening shaped to releasably receive said attachment portion therein in more than two radial positions such that said attachment portion can be generally rigidly coupled to said handle, and wherein said handle is configured to be manually decoupled, without the use of tools, from said attachment portion by twisting said handle relative to said attachment portion such that said attachment portion and said handle are not generally rigidly coupled, wherein said handle has a generally continuous outer surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with said opening of said handle; and~~

~~a feed arm including a pair of feed arm openings, a first one of said feed arm openings being shaped to receive said attachment portion therethrough, a second one of said feed arm openings being shaped to receive said slide rod of said slicer therethrough, The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said second one of said feed arm openings is formed as the center opening of a generally annular shape which contributes at least 50% of the weight of said feed grip.~~

11-17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said handle is generally tube-shaped.

19. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said handle includes a pair of cam surfaces located in said handle opening, each cam surface being located and configured to interact with one of said feet to urge an associated foot inwardly when said handle is twisted relative to said attachment portion.

20-27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said opening of said handle includes a mouth at a distal end thereof, and wherein said mouth is configured to receive said attachment portion therein in more than two radial positions.

29. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 28 wherein said mouth is shaped to receive said attachment portion therein in any radial position.

30-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) A feed grip for being coupled to a slide rod of a slicer comprising:

a gripping plate having a front surface and rear surface, said front surface being shaped to grip a food product, said gripping plate including an attachment portion extending generally outwardly from said rear surface, said attachment portion including a pair of generally parallel spaced apart legs;

a handle having an opening shaped to releasably receive said attachment portion therein and urge said legs toward each other when said attachment portion is inserted into said opening, said handle having a pair of end openings, each end opening being configured to receive at least part of one of said legs therein to generally rigidly couple said attachment portion to said handle, and wherein said handle is configured to be manually decoupled from said attachment portion by twisting said handle relative to said attachment portion such that said attachment portion and said handle are not generally rigidly coupled and wherein said handle has a generally continuous outer surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with said end openings; and

a feed arm configured to be coupled to at least one of said gripping plate or said handle, wherein said feed arm is configured to receive the slide rod of a slicer therethrough.

33. (Previously Presented) The feed grip of claim 32 wherein said opening includes a generally tapered side wall such that said legs engage said side wall and are urged toward each other when said attachment portion is inserted into said opening.

34. (New) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said handle includes said generally continuous surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with said opening of said handle when said feed arm is not coupled to said handle.

35. (New) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said handle has a continuous outer surface.

36. (New) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said opening is circular in end view.

37. (New) The feed grip of claim 1 wherein said attachment portion is coupled to said gripping plate by an overmold extending around at least part of said attachment portion and at least part of said gripping plate.

38. (New) The feed grip of claim 32 wherein said handle includes said generally continuous surface and lacks any auxiliary openings that communicate with said opening of said handle when said feed arm is not coupled to said handle.

39. (New) The feed grip of claim 32 wherein said handle has a continuous outer surface.

40. (New) The feed grip of claim 32 wherein said opening is circular in end view.